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Kansas City Chamber Orchestra Announces Its "Enchanted Strings" Concert Wednesday, February 12, Folly Theater

*Guest Conducted by Spunky Newcomer Carolyn Watson, Concert Features
Vaughan Williams' "The Lark Ascending,"
Schubert's "Symphony No. 5" and
Debussy's "Dances sacrée et profane,"
Perfect for Valentine's Day Romantics*

Kansas City, Mo.: The Kansas City Chamber Orchestra is pleased to announce their 33rd Season will continue on Wednesday, February 12th in the Stephen B. Metzler Hall at The Folly Theater, downtown Kansas City, Missouri. The magnificent Folly will be the perfect atmosphere for the Valentine program entitled "Enchanted Strings," featuring guest conductor Carolyn Watson with the baton.

"There is nothing quite like music to express emotions," explained KCCO Music Director Bruce Sorrell, "and when it comes to expressing love in all its guises, it is unmatched. This program is beautiful and atmospheric, and the perfect way to get into the Valentine's mood. Debussy's gorgeous *Dances sacrée et profane* was composed specifically to highlight the capabilities of the (then newly-improved) harp; only Debussy could deliver a composition so exquisite. Ralph Vaughan Williams' famous tone poem for solo violin, *The Lark Ascending*, soars heavenward and leaves the listener breathless in contemplation of nature. And Schubert displays his love and admiration for Mozart in his exquisite *Symphony No. 5*, composed when he was only 19. 'Mozart, immortal Mozart,' Schubert exclaimed at the time. It is the perfect homage and will warm your heart on a cold February night."

"'Enchanted Strings' is an incredibly interesting and diverse program," said Carolyn Watson, "featuring an exciting young harpist, Katherine Siochi, and KCCO's fabulous co-concertmaster, Tamamo Someya Gibbs. Opening the concert is the US premiere of Australian composer Elena Kats-Chernin's 'Moon Feather Magic,' and rounding out the first half are popular works by Ravel and Mascagni. The grand finale is Schubert's 'Symphony No. 5,' written when the composer was merely a teenager! In many ways, it is the most classical of the composer's nine symphonies. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with the KC Chamber Orchestra, especially in the magnificent Folly Theater," said Watson.

A heartwarming array of passionate music for strings, the KCCO Valentines' Concert will feature:

Elena Kats-Chernin – *Moon Feather Magic*

C. Debussy – *Dances sacrée et profane*
Katherine Siochi, harp soloist

Pietro Mascagni – *Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana*

M. Ravel – *Pavane pour une infante defunté*

R. Vaughan Williams *The Lark Ascending*
Tamamo Someya Gibbs, violin soloist

F. Schubert – *Symphony No. 5*



Conductor – Carolyn Watson

A major prizewinner at the 2012 Emmerich Kálmán International Operetta Conducting Competition in Budapest, Australian, conductor **Carolyn Watson** was also a Fellow of the American Academy of Conducting at the Aspen Music Festival where she studied with David Zinman. She has conducted orchestras throughout Europe including the Brandenburg Symphony, BBC Concert Orchestra, North Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Kodály Philharmonic, Savaria Symphony Orchestra, Budapest Operetta Theatre, Bulgarian State Opera Bourgas and in Russia, the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic.

Carolyn currently serves as Director of Orchestral Activities at The University of Kansas whilst continuing to enjoy an active freelance career throughout the US, Europe and Australia. Since moving to the US she has conducted the Dallas Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Kansas City Ballet, Austin Symphony, Detroit Symphony Civic Orchestra and World Youth Symphony Orchestra. From 2013-15 she held the prestigious position of Music Director of the Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra. Also active in the opera world Carolyn was one of six conductors selected for the elite Dallas Opera Institute for Women Conductors in 2017, as well as serving as resident at the Israeli National Opera and assisting Sir Charles Mackerras on his final two productions at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Glyndebourne.

<http://www.carolyn-watson.com/>



Elena Kats-Chernin – Moon Feather Magic

"Together, we are better. That simple understanding sits at the heart of the Hush project." Developed by medical pioneer Dr. Catherine Crock A.M. to reduce the stress and anxiety felt by young patients and their families in hospitals, the Hush music collection transformed that difficult environment with carefully curated music from some of Australia's foremost musicians and talents. It is now played in hospitals and homes across the globe. For this project, Hush sent 12 Australian composers to do residencies and workshops in adolescent health units across Australia. The composers and teenagers played music together, shared experiences and explored how music might help people during hard times. Elena Kats-Chernin, one of

Australia's most prolific and consistently innovative composers, was one of the composers. Her piece, *Moon Feather Magic*, was one of the 12 results. According to Australia Music Centre, "Her colorful, energetic, and often propulsive music has been choreographed by dance-makers around the world. In 2000 she collaborated with leading Australian choreographer Meryl Tankard on *Deep Sea Dreaming* which was broadcast to an audience of millions worldwide as part of the opening ceremonies of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games." Trained in Moscow, Australia and Germany, Kats-Chernin's work represents KCCO's continued focus on female contemporary composers and their impact on the classical music genre.

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/artist/kats-chernin-elena>

Claude Debussy – Dances Sacrée et profane

To help promote their new instrument, the harp, the Pleyel et Cie (harp manufacturer) commissioned a composer to compose a piece that would showcase its capabilities. Until the 19th Century, harps were diatonic (or set in one key) so you'd need to bring two harps to play in two different keys! But the double action pedal harp (modern concert harp) could finally play in any key and switch keys in the middle of a piece. Debussy's music often emphasized the harp so he was a logical composer to commission. Though the piece is comprised of two dances, they are connected without pause into a seamless whole. The first dance is infused with an ethereal sensibility, graceful, hovering, awe-inspiring. The second dance begins with a waltz, the harp creating sparkles overhead. Interesting that Pleyel is defunct but Debussy's *Dances Sacrée et Profane* is still very much alive and celebrated.



Harp soloist – Katherine Siochi

Praised by the New York Times as “excellent,” Katherine Siochi is an internationally-acclaimed harp soloist and recently appointed principal harpist of the Kansas City Symphony. She served as principal harpist of the Sarasota Orchestra from 2017-2019. Katherine is the 2016 gold medalist of the 10th USA International Harp Competition, one of the world’s most prestigious harp contests, and is only the second American to win the prize since 1989. Audiences worldwide have commended Katherine for her virtuosity, as well as her poetic interpretations and innate sense of timing. Katherine strives to connect with her listeners through raw emotion and intensely expressive performances.

As a Concert Artist, Katherine presented recitals and masterclasses in 23 cities across the US. She has given solo concerts in Hong Kong, China, Israel, and at Lyon & Healy Hall in Chicago. As an orchestral musician Katherine has performed in major venues such as Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, and Alice Tully Hall, and substitutes frequently with the New York Philharmonic. Katherine has performed concertos with the Sarasota Orchestra, Juilliard Orchestra, Louisiana Philharmonic, and Indiana University Festival Orchestra. Her performances have been featured on national radio programs: NPR’s “From The Top,” on New York Public Radio for WQXR’s “Young Artist Showcase,” and on American Public Media’s “Performance Today.” She holds her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in harp performance from The Juilliard School, where she studied with NY Philharmonic principal harpist Nancy Allen.

<http://www.katherinesiochi.com/>

R. Vaughan Williams – *The Lark Ascending*

Vaughn Williams’ masterpiece for solo violin and orchestra constantly tops the charts and delights audiences. It has topped the Classic FM Hall of Fame nine times, claiming the top spot again in 2019. *The Lark Ascending* is a short, single-movement work inspired by the 1881 poem of the same name by English writer George Meredith. Originally written for violin and piano and completed in 1914, Williams reworked it for solo violin and orchestra after the First World War. This version was performed in 1921. Williams termed the piece a “pastoral romance for orchestra” and his writing evokes the glorious image of the rolling British countryside. It begins with the darkest, richest sounds that a violin can make, then rises to an airy lightness, a far cry from the serious themes of war that Williams had in mind when he first wrote it on the eve of war in 1914. The composer later told the story that the tune came into his head as he walked the cliff on the coast in Kent on the day Britain entered the First World War. After scribbling down his notes, he was arrested by a young scout who made a citizens’ arrest as he thought Williams was scribbling details of the coastline for the enemy!



Violin Soloist – Tamamo Someya Gibbs

Tamamo Gibbs entered the Tokyo College of Music Prep School at age 6 and studied at Toho High School and Toho College of Music under the tutelage of Kenji Kobayashi. Upon graduation, she played for the Shinsei Japan Symphony Orchestra for several months before the New World Symphony in Miami Beach invited her to join as a co-principal violinist. In 1995, Gibbs joined the Sacramento Symphony as a core first violinist, later joining the Kansas City Symphony in 1996. In 1999, she was appointed principal second violinist of the Kansas City Symphony as well as named co-concertmaster of the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra. Tamamo has performed in Japan, the United States, France, Monaco, Israel, Brazil and Argentina, and participated in numerous music festivals including the Evian Music Festival in France, the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado, the Kent/Blossom Music Festival in Ohio, and the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming. Past solo engagements include appearances with the National Repertory Orchestra, the Penn’s Woods Music Festival Orchestra, the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, and the Kansas City Symphony. She currently resides in Overland Park, Kansas, with her husband, Mark Gibbs (principal cellist of the Kansas City Symphony), and their two children. <https://www.kcsymphony.org/musician/tamamo-gibbs/>

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Franz Schubert – *Symphony No. 5*

1816 was a busy year for Franz Schubert. He composed approximately 200 compositions, including a mass, various other sacred choral works, his Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, an overture, two concertante works for violin and orchestra, at least two string quartets, three violin sonatas, various other chamber works, two piano sonatas, numerous dances and dozens of songs. He had turned 19 in January. He has also begun both a law degree and his Symphony No. 5 in the same year. But thank goodness his studies did not win out. Schubert played viola in an amateur orchestra that was small enough to perform in a friend's apartment. It was at one of this ensemble's meetings that his Fifth Symphony had its first performance. He readily noted publicly and in his diary that Mozart had a sublime influence on his music and his life.

The Fifth Symphony is the perfect entry-level piece to introduce a new classical music enthusiast to Schubert's music. It is fresh, light and just bursting with tunes. It fits exactly where Schubert was in life when he wrote it at 19! And it might have been the piece that caused Schubert to break away from his planned law degree. It's youthful exuberance is intoxicating and makes a wonderful ending to our Valentine's sweets.

TICKETS

Individual tickets for Enchanted Strings range from **\$20 to \$35** for the concert only, with additional package prices for the optional Champagne Chocolate Event. Senior, ½ price student and Military ticket discounts are available. Students 5 - 18 FREE with Adult Season ticket holder. Tickets also include a free pre-show talk with the conductor at 6:30 p.m. Purchase tickets online at KCChamberOrchestra.org or call (816) 235-6222.

Champagne Chocolate Celebration:

A signature KCCO event immediately following the concert, featuring champagne, soft drinks, desserts, cheeses, savory treats and more from, KC's Australian bakery **Banksia** and **Annedore's Fine Chocolates** with special entertainment. Limited availability - Ticket packages including the optional event range from \$25 to \$50, free for Season Ticket holders.

The Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, now in its 33rd season, is the region's only professional resident chamber orchestra. Founded by music director and conductor Bruce Sorrell, the orchestra features talented professional musicians who live and work in the metropolitan area including members of the Kansas City Symphony, music faculties of the University of Kansas and the Conservatory at University of Missouri – Kansas City, and freelance professionals. For more information, visit KCChamberOrchestra.

2019-2020 KCCO FULL SEASON OF CONCERT PROGRAMS:

***Night Reflections*, Thursday, September 26, 2019, 7:30 p.m., Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral**

***Magnificent Holidays*, Tuesday, December 10, 2019, 7:30 p.m., Old Mission United Methodist Church**

***Enchanted Strings*, Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 7:30 p.m., Folly Theater**

***Mystical Spring*, Saturday, May 2, 8:00 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church**

Bruce Sorrell, Conductor, Park International Center for Music soloists

A blockbuster season finale featuring the orchestra and award winning soloists from the International Center for Music, Park University performing Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and other exciting concertos for strings and piano.